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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001193

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: PRESSURING SYRIA TO NORMALIZE
SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER

REF: STATE 151378

Classified by Charge d'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) The Charge August 20 delivered reftel demarche concerning pressuring Syria to normalize the Syrian-Lebanese border to MFA Under Secretary Yousif Mahmood. Mahmood acknowledged that Syrian disruption of Lebanese trade impacts Bahrain, which imports a wide range of Lebanese products. MFA Director for Bilateral Affairs Dhafer Al Umrani, who participated in the meeting, added that international trade routes should be open for all.

2. (C) Mahmood agreed to take the matter up with the Syrians. He continued, however, that Bahrain would like to hear from Lebanon on the issue, either publicly or privately. He said he had met with the Lebanese Charge several times recently, and she had not raised it. Lebanon should publicly request that Arab and international governments assist in resolving problems at the border, Mahmood recommended.

ZIADEH